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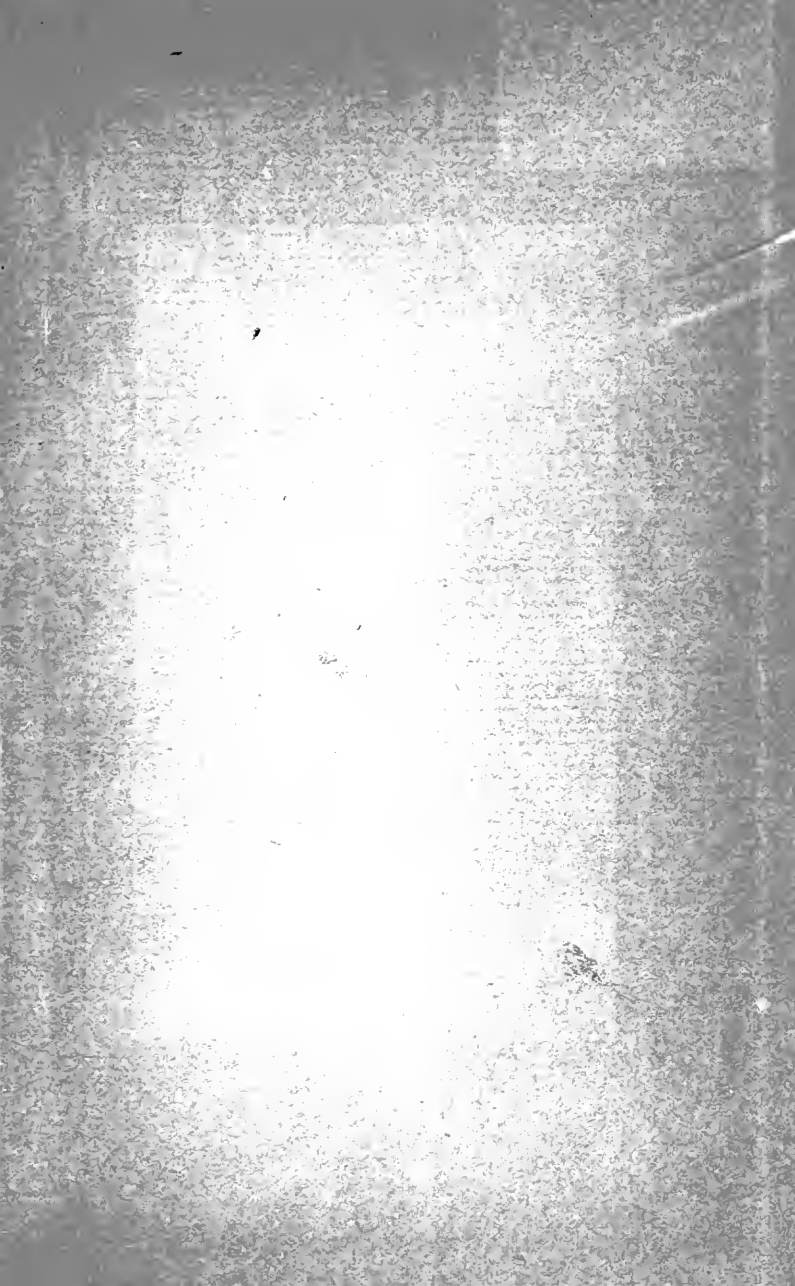
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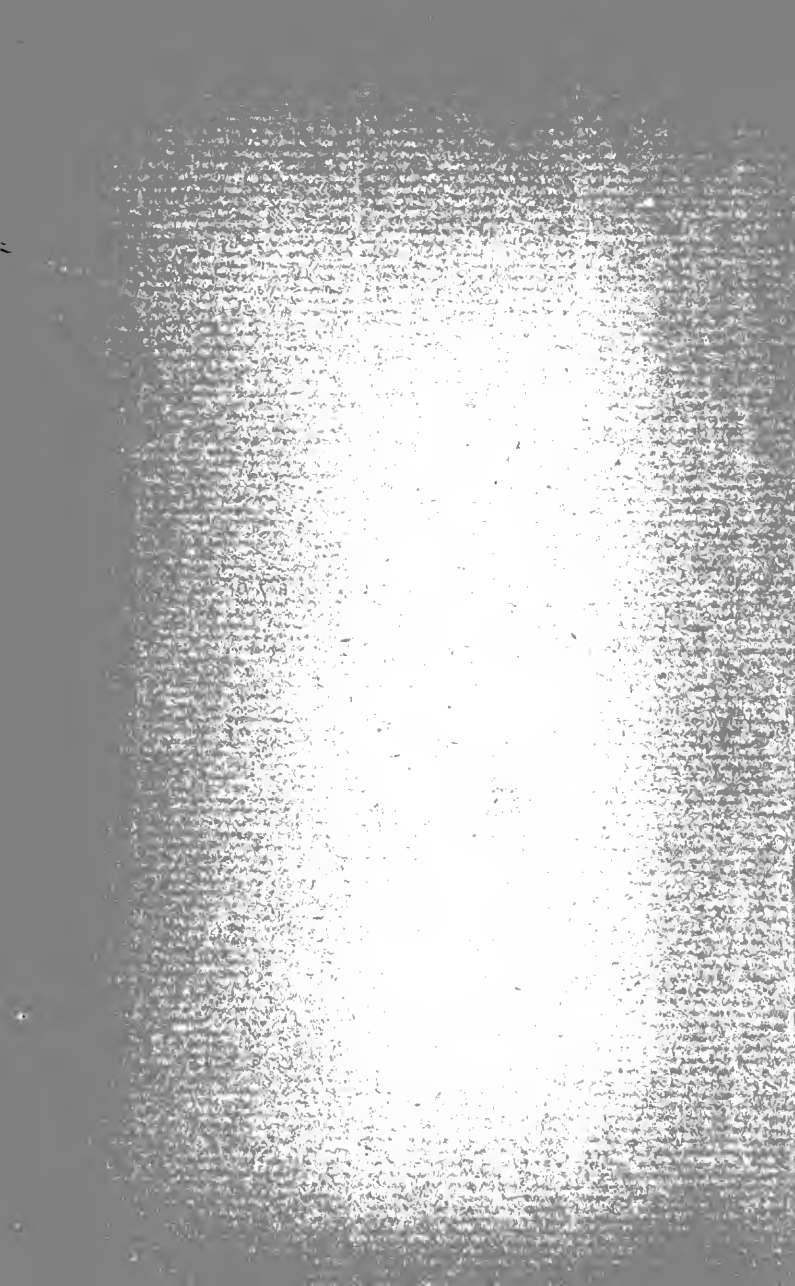
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BRIGHT AND BRIEF
TALKS TO MEN

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BRIGHT AND BRIEF TALKS TO MEN

TWENTY-ONE ADDRESSES FOR
PLEASANT SUNDAY AFTERNOONS

BY
F. W. ATKIN

LONDON
H. R. ALLENSON
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I

A Man's Influence

No man liveth to himself."—ROMANS xiv. 7.

How closely we are bound to our fellow men ! We are related to every man near us. We affect men a little ; they, in the bulk, affect us much. I cannot sin alone, nor can any man. I cannot separate myself, or my acts, from the chequered life around me. I am a thread in the loom and affect or am affected by the other threads in the loom. Each crime is a wound in the body of which I am a part. Each noble deed is done by a man related to me, and I am elevated by it. It is my cause which is at stake in the homes of thoughtless luxury, or the haunts of squalid poverty. The mansion and the doss-house, your dwelling and the common lodging-house, stand on the same earth and affect one another for good

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or ill continually. Every drunkard is a reproach to every sober man. Every harlot is an insult and slur on a pure woman. The gin-shop is a scandal to the church.

No man liveth unto himself. Many a good sailor has been drowned in a wreck brought about by bad seamanship. Many an honest man has been ruined by a rogue.

I. Politically. However conservative you may be, if the mass vote radically you have to take the consequences. If a rascal takes a position that ought to mean honour, you, as well as those who put him there, must bear the result. So every man's opinions are of interest to every other man, because affected by them.

II. Socially. If there is a street full of men ground down by employers, or crushed by the system under which they live, every tradesman bears the consequences in diminished trade and a shrunken income. If there lives one family careless of health and cleanli-

ness, every house in the neighbourhood, and every street in the town, is in danger; yet that may be the family of a nobody.

III. **Morally.** Of two towns, one low lying and swampy, full of ague and diphtheria; the other hilly, breezy and sweet; you would choose to live in this rather than in that.

If there are two towns, one morally elevated, the other sunk and degraded, it makes a lot of difference to the people who move into these towns.

You would rather your children be in one town than the other.

If there is one more bad man in the town it is the more unsafe for your boy to go into a shop, and more risky for your daughter to walk on the street. If a man lights a fire in his garden, the smoke will come across yours; and if sin is encouraged in your neighbours' boys—how will you keep yours? All sin is not in environment, but there is sufficient

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danger in surroundings to urge us to keep off the fever-stricken spots.

IV. Eternally. This is a long leap, but we are not rash when we say that we shall finally be judged on our relationships to our neighbours. It is a bad job if you do not pray ; it is also bad if you are not kind.

It is bad if your neighbour does not know Jesus ; it is also bad if you do not speak to him about the Lord. Our neglect of our neighbours is already condemned. " If thou considerest not them that are drawn unto death, and those that be ready to be slain ; if thou sayest ' behold we know it not ' ; doth He that pondereth the heart consider it, and He that keepeth thy soul doth He not know it, and shall He not render to every man according to his work."

II

God's Prisoners

"The Lord . . . despiseth not His prisoners."
—PSALM lxix. 33.

You know the meaning of the word. The law puts its hand on a man's shoulder and says, "You are my prisoner." The idea is control and limitation. In the hand or under lock and key the man is a prisoner, because his liberty is limited, and his movements confined.

Are any of us prisoners of God in this sense? Yes! There are limits put upon us by the providence of God. We are fit for some things; we are not for others. We might fill one place, but another is an impossibility.

I. Poverty. Over which we have no control. We have no hope, perhaps, but to be

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poor to the very end. We are not fit or able to earn more than barely enough.

The message of the text is that such limitations are never despised by the Lord, and that the poorest of the poor are never scorned by Him.

II. Meanness of Natural Endowment. We would all be orators if we could, but shall never do more than "talk right on." We would all perform like Rubinstein, but shall have to be content to play a few Sankeys on a harmonium. Some cobblers blossom into Members of Parliament; but most of us will have to stick to the lap-stone.

There is an election of nature as well as of grace. "Oh, if I could only stand up and speak! I would," etc. Yes; and maybe the Lord made you fit only to sit still and keep silence.

But you need not go on to say, "Surely the Lord is ashamed of me," for He does not despise His prisoners.

III. **Trouble.** That over which we have no control, and for which we are not responsible. It comes to us. We cannot be the same. It cripples our usefulness. It may be in business, or right at home indoors. Many a one has said, "I cannot do as I would. Everybody doesn't know, but";—and then came the story of the family or personal grief and trial. The Lord lift up such bowing heads! We are sure such prisoners are never despised.

IV. **Lastly**, there are the shortlived, frail and physically incapable.

Henry Ward Beecher said a man ought to be ashamed to die before he is seventy. Yes, and so we shall be if we may have Beecher's start and constitution and upbringing. But nature has treated some of us very scurvily. We would be brave in the street corner but for predisposition to asthma, or if our lungs were sound.

We would sing like angels, but we have no

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ear for music. We would go to China, but we are lifelong invalids. Many a soul as heroic as Mackay's and Hannington's has its ministry to spend in a bedroom. And old age comes. That confinement and limitation of the sturdiest and best. But such are not thrown heedlessly aside. The Lord despiseth not His prisoners.

III

The Difference Christ Makes

“ If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature.”
—2 COR. V. 17.

Internally. Religion is not like a man having money. Christ's pardon and grace is not like giving a man a shilling. You can put that in your pocket, take it out, look at it, count it, or perhaps lose it. But it is rather like a doctor giving you completely new health. You cannot pocket it, or finger it, or show it in your hands. Nevertheless, everybody knows you have it, and nobody sooner than yourself.

How do I know I have it? How do *you* know you have got good health after sickness?

Old things have passed away. I am a new creation in Christ Jesus. New feelings, new comforts, new thoughts, a new heart.

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Externally. Yes; first different inside, then outside. The heart, then the hand.

The man can now do what he could not before, can bear what he could not before. Once the least temptation knocked him down; now he stands firmly through big ones. I know this change is very gradual with some of us, and it throws us open to the charge that the change is not real. But it is real. Only the Lord has much trouble with some of us. We are only just cured. The disease is only just destroyed, and we are very long (to our shame) getting up our new strength. But it is coming; then we shall be completely changed externally too.

Eternally. Thank God: Once done, done for ever. This work lasts. I know a street in London, every house of which was condemned to come down to make room for a new highway. What a fool a man would be to build in that street! So build the men who build only on earth, where a "Notice to Quit" is

THE DIFFERENCE CHRIST MAKES 19

always fluttering at our letter-box. It need not be. We have a change now that will be permanent.

Splendid! Here is a thing that time will never wither, and changes never injure.

What must it be to be good, and never bad again! To be happy, and never sad again! To be strong, and never weak again! To see Christ, and never forget Him again!

But this change must be yours. Must really take place in you.

Clothes on another man's back will not cover you! Coals in another man's cellar will not warm you! Wages in another man's pocket will not keep you! And religion in another man's heart will not change you!

IV

Why not a Sinless World ?

“ God planted a garden.”—GENESIS ii. 8.

IT is a very old question ; and, if a man wishes to raise objections, a very convenient question : “ Why did not God make creatures who could not sin ? ” then there would have been no sin, no misery or shame. “ Why did not God make his creatures without the power of sinning.”

So God did ! Did what ?

Make creatures without the power to sin ! Where ? In field and forest, and sea, mountain and valley. The world teems with living creatures, and only one kind out of the multitude can sin. Cows, dogs, birds, fishes, mice, tigers,—none of these ever commit sin. God made the round world and said,

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“Good,” but was not satisfied. God made the world decorate itself with chains of silver rivers, and the fringe and lace of forest and field, and gem itself with flowers. Again God said, “Good,” but was not satisfied. Then God made moving life, fish with fin to paddle, bird with wing to fly, the creatures of hill and wood to leap and run.

Again God said, “Good,” but was not satisfied. The Lord could make a creature more beautiful than the bird, or swifter than the hound, or stronger than the lion. So God thought again, and said He would make a man after His own likeness.

Then was man made, with power to discriminate, a mind to think—in fact, made responsible for his doings. Then God said, “Very good,” and was satisfied. In plain terms, God was not content until He had made a creature who could recognize His Maker. A creature whom He could trust, and with whom He could commune; a creature who

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could develop moral qualities. Only a coward will moan about being responsible. To be responsible is to be trusted with something. And from a child we like to be trusted. Responsibility is honourable. The responsible man is the great man. If the creatures betray the trust, God is sorry and will try to win them back to faithfulness. Some will remain loyal, and in these the Lord will take pleasure. At the close of an open-air meeting a man said with a sneer, "Who made Adam sin?" I at once answered, "Who made you do your last sin? Point out the man who caused you to tell your last lie, and your finger will hook in and point to yourself." The story shows that—

I. No place is free from temptation. There is a serpent even in Eden. There is opportunity for wrong-doing everywhere. Wherever a man goes he takes his liability to temptation with him.

II. Temptation, always plausible, mani-

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feels a great anxiety for your advancement and welfare, and usually guarantees your safety.

Ye shall be as gods ; ye shall not surely die.

III. If acceded to, shame always follows.
First herself, then her companion. Both Adam and Eve are ashamed in the presence of purity ; degraded by the first touch of sin.

IV. The consequences always prove the Devil's lie. Banishment, Pain, and Toil.

V

Some One at the Door

“Behold I stand at the door.”—REV. iii. 20.

THIS verse is part of a letter to a church. Yet it is a text constantly used for evangelistic purposes. Urgent appeals have been made to the unconverted, hundreds of times, from this text. And the instinct of the preacher is right. “If any hear” is very emphatic. There are two main thoughts.

I. Christ is near the soul.

II. Why there?

Now it is plain that if Christ knocks at the door, He is quite close to the house. A man knocking is on the threshold. This leads to the thought that a man cannot keep his own secrets. If Christ is near enough to

knock, then *He is near enough* to hear all that goes on inside.

I once knocked at a door, and soon heard furniture being moved about, cupboard doors being shut, a general straightening up within. I was amused. I did not object to them getting ready to receive a visitor, but they did not think I heard. Being near enough to knock, I could hear what went on inside.

That is true about Jesus Christ. Sometimes I have been startled by the thought. Near enough to hear the secret wish ; to hear the private thoughts, to perceive the querulous complaint, and, thank God, also to hear the unuttered prayer.

He is also near enough to see all the traffic in and out of the heart. He sees the income of the soul, and its output. He sees what kind of company you keep in the heart. He sees what and whom you harbour within. Standing at the door, all the traffic of your life passes before Him.

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II. Why there?

1. **Certainly not as a spy.** Though He sees and hears all, that is not His errand. He does not stand ear-at-keyhole, but hand-on-shoulder. That is, He wants to come in.

2. **He knows your need,** and knows only He can supply it.

You have difficulty with yourself. You cannot overcome yourself. He wants to come in to help you. You remember the story of His awakening by the terrified disciples in the boat—how with a word He rebuked wave and wind, and they fell back quiet.

Many a man has been at the mercy of passion or habit. Christ has been welcomed to the soul, and will, temper, passion, habit, have owned the Master Voice and have been stilled.

3. **He comes to bring supplies of grace and joy.** The second half of the text points to this. John McNeill tells a story of his student days. He felt moved one morning to visit a case of poverty which he well knew.

He knocked at the door. Quietly but swiftly the key was turned in the lock. He knocked, but there was no response until he spoke. Then the door was flung open. 'Oh, Mr. McNeill, I didn't know it was you. I thought it was the man for the rent. I couldn't pay it last week, and I am not ready for him now, and I couldn't see him.' "No," said the young student, "I am not the man for the rent; I am the man that's brought it." How many souls keep out their best friend under the impression that He comes making great demands. It is a mistake, a great mistake.

If the soul will entertain Him, then soon he turns host and fills the hungry with good things. Some one is at the door. Will you let Him in? The catch is on your side of the door.

VI

A Fine Young Man

“A choice young man and a goodly.”

—I SAMUEL ix. 2.

THAT is—Saul was a fine young man. Nature had been very lavish in her endowments. Fine physically, fine as to courage, and I think fine as to temper. Saul was a modest, generous-hearted young man. Nature started him well.

Yet his is one of those stories which make it perfectly clear that fine natural endowments do not make up for lack of religious convictions. Saul was well endowed everywhere excepting here—*He lacked deep religious convictions.*

I. His lack shown. It has been pointed out as singular that Saul did not know Samuel by sight when he met him. Samuel was a

travelling preacher and judge. Was Saul not enough interested in Samuel to go to hear him when in the neighbourhood of his home? It appears not. Did Saul never go up to any religious feast at which Samuel was present? It seems not.

It is a bad look-out if a young fellow lives very long without getting to know even one religious teacher by sight.

1. Then when Saul was impatiently waiting for Samuel to come to offer sacrifice before a battle, did not Saul manifest deep-seated irreverence when he laid hold and offered the sacrifice himself because Samuel was a little delayed?

2. Was not that cry, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" a piece of surprised sarcasm; as though the folk who knew him said, "What! Saul a Prophet!" And of what could such sarcasm be born but an ill opinion of Saul's fitness for such company? The people did not expect to see religion in *him*.

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II. **The result of this lack.** He soon broke away from Samuel, the Prophet who loved him when he anointed him, and on to the very end.

It is a sad sign when young men shake off the hand that controls them; when they turn from their old best friend. It brought the grave disobedience and lapse and deceit over Amalek. Saul did not fully obey the Lord. He kept the best things to trim a triumph. He met Samuel with a blessing on his lips and said, "I have done what I was told"; but in his heart cursing his bad luck that the bleating of the sheep could be heard by Samuel. Then that fine open disposition gradually soured, and grew morose and suspicious, leading to attempted murder.

Then came the crisis when Saul was face to face with great danger and had no one to fall back upon—the Prophet dead, the Lord departed. And he sank so low as to consult a witch

And this ends in suicide.

Sad! Sad! such wrecks of noble lives!

Few men ever had a better start. Few men have made a worse ending. And all because Saul lacked deep religious convictions.

I have seen in cases butterflies pinned down for exhibition, every part and colour distinct.

We have here seen in the scriptures Saul pinned down. It is for us to read, mark, learn, but not that we may throw stones at him, for another book is being written. You and I are being written in this. How good a start we had! What chances! What aids! Let us see to it that our story ends differently, and altogether to the Glory of God.

III. One further question: Had Saul any fair chances?

1. He had a good start.

2. He had a great uplift of heart at the time of his anointing. The young man was so moved and stirred that it was as though he had got a new heart.

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3. When accused of his disloyalty to God's trust and commission, how humble and ashamed at length he appeared to be ! But it was of a mean and personal sort. He was ashamed for his people to see his disgrace.

What might have been had penitence that day been sincere !

This man pushed his way down through chance after chance and appeal after appeal. God never lets a man go without trying hard to keep him. •

Here lies the guilt of Saul, and of us all. We are called, and called again. And the doom comes because we refuse to hear.

VII

Satan in Kid Gloves

“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil.”—ISAIAH V. 20.

“SATAN in kid gloves;” and it is a grim fact. That is my subject; but I have not chosen it because it sounds funny.

I have put it in that way because it is easily remembered and I want you to carry away what I have to say.

In London, not long ago two burglars, at different times, were caught wearing kid gloves. The reason they wear gloves is because paint easily takes finger marks and thumb marks. Before now a burglar has been convicted by a thumb mark on a dusty plate.

Burglars want to do their work without being found out. They don't desire to call

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attention to themselves (humble minded men that they are!). The paint may be without a smirch, and yet a great burglary has taken place.

The Devil works in kid gloves. A man may have been robbed of all the best that he had, and there is not a finger mark on him to show it.

I. The Devil is very particular about appearances. He can lie and cheat and gamble and sin and not have a speck on his cuffs or collars, and not have a streak of bad manners about him. His victims are sinners as others, but they are not caught yet. Sinners, but so far undiscovered. This section of Satan is very anxious to keep respectable.

II. The Devil will steal the best you have, and leave you apparently all right. He will rob a beautiful girl of her virtue, and leave her beautiful; rob a fine, well-set-up young fellow of the cleanness of his heart, and he still looks as clean as his unstained

companions ; rob a tradesman of his integrity and honesty, and people still think he has not a stain upon his character.

Aldermen and Councillors have been known to take prices for contracts and " notes " for votes, and still appear before their constituents open-faced, and cleanhanded, and honest as the daylight.

I have known ministers who drank on the sly, but there was nothing to show it.

Honour gone, virtue gone, sweetness gone, truth gone, but nobody knew.

If the devil's work showed, people would avoid it as poison. But it goes on and on and nobody sees a finger mark. The soul is robbed of all the best things it has, and the devil has not left a stain behind.

(3) But—Secret failure *is* failure ; and secret sin *is* sin. If Satan has come into a man it little matters whether or not his work at once shows. Emptiness is emptiness, and though people may be taken in—

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“ You will have to get up early, If you want to take in God.”

III. The most fatal case of all is when Satan is robbing a man and the man himself is asleep and does not know.

It often is happening. Because a man has not watched he is losing all good from his heart. May the Lord make us watchful and brave to defend our moral wealth!

VIII

Will Iron Swim ?

2 KINGS vi. 1-7.

THERE is a quaint story from the old history of the doings of the Prophets of Israel telling us that once iron was made to swim.

A working man, and a poor one at that, was in great trouble because the head of an axe he had borrowed had flown from the haft and fallen into a pool. It would not have mattered so much if it had been his own, but "alas! master, for it was borrowed."

The Prophet delivered the man out of his anxiety by bringing the axe to the surface in a miraculous fashion.

This started my question. "Will iron swim?" or "Can iron be made to swim?"

It is really a parabolic way of asking, Can

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the down man be got up? Can the fallen be raised? Can the half drowned be brought up out of the deep that overwhelms him?

Can iron swim? By itself, No. It has no natural capacity for swimming; it cannot develop power to raise itself. It cannot grow buoyant. Where sunk, there it will lie. Or if placed in water it will sink straightway.

Can iron swim? By the touch of a higher power, Yes. The world is girded by floating iron. Shipbuilders are so fashioning iron that it swims. How? By laying hold of the laws of the universe which are the laws of God.

Gravitation draws the iron downwards at such a weight. The water bears it upward at such a pressure. The ship-modeller knows, and he runs his ship between the two laws, and so iron swims.

Then, **Can the down man get up? By himself, No!** He has no natural capacity for raising himself out of sin. He cannot

develop the power to lift himself up. But—

By the touch of a higher power, Yes. The world is filling with men who have been brought up out of the horrible pit. The Holy Spirit is constantly fashioning down men so that they do come up. How? **By laying hold of the laws and promises of God.**

Sin presses down at such a weight. Divine grace bears upward at such a pressure. The Redeemer knows, and by the uplifting power of grace and love, and in spite of the down-bearing weight of sin, He lifts up his man.

IX

What is Man ?

“ What is man, that Thou art mindful of him ? ”
—PSALM viii. 4.

I. The Naturalist's view. The answer to this question depends upon whom you ask. An ordinary observer with the tendencies of a naturalist might reply: A tiny creature living upon one of the minor members of our Solar system. The earth he lives on is not by any means the most important member of the universe, a tiny eccentric speck in the mass and space.

And in that speck he is neither so big nor swift nor beautiful nor strong nor long-lived nor healthy as many another creature on the same earth. Some creatures have clearer

eyes and can see farther. Some creatures have keener ears and can hear finer sounds. Some creatures are better mechanics.

That is the naturalist's view of the matter, and you know science cannot lie.

II. The Chemist replies: What is man?
A make-up of gases, salts, charcoal, and a sprinkle of one or two other substances out of the great castor of nature. That is the Chemist's statement of the case.

You know it is true and so you hang your head and beg to be allowed to pass on.

III. What is man? The Biologist answers: He is a bundle of the varied and peculiar features of the many different creatures who have gone before him. He is not like any one of them, but has borrowed parts from all. Look at that man lifting the skin of his forehead, perhaps able to move his whole scalp. Well! have you never seen a horse shake a fly from his ribs by making his skin quiver? You got that from the horse.

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See how clever those sailors are in the rigging, and the fireman on ladder and ledge ; how they cling, and crawl, and suspend. Monkeys did that in the forest trees before the first man was born.

See that woman smelling food to find out whether it is fresh and sweet. The cats and dogs taught her that. And you even catch yourself wishing your sense of smell or sight was equal to that of the hound or bird from which you borrowed that power.

And so it is with every physical movement you make. So ! says the Biologist,—So it is. And we do not contradict either of the answers given to us.

But there is not a man of us who does not feel that there is very much left unsaid. Yes, it is true, the hawk has a clearer eye ; but looking at a landscape I can see more than any hawk that ever flew.

The hound has a keener ear, but I can hear more than any hound ever heard. Many a

creature has a finer sense of smell than I have, but I never knew one that could find in a rose or lily or primrose what I can.

Some one said to Mr. Ruskin, "A cat may look at a king." "Yes," he replied, "but she can't see one."

IV. What is a man ? Let the Psalmist answer. "Thou hast made him a little lower than God, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands."

Another speaker in the Bible says, "There is a spirit in man and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding."

What is a man ? A creation of God, open to the approach of God. Made by God, but capable of communion with God. A creature of the earth, but able to render God service. A creature of time, whose destiny is wrought out in eternity.

This body of which the biologist gives the history and the naturalist the comparative

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capacity, is but a casement, and not the man ; the window, and not the soul that looks through it. The mind and spirit, and not the body, is the standard of the man.

X

God's Triangle

“What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly.”

—MICAH vi. 8.

ONLY too often it happens that we observe cases in life where religion seems to be divorced from good behaviour. We notice instances of men who profess religion, but whose lives are not straight. Sometimes we even hear of the plea that a man's faith makes up for his moral lapses, his hardness, or his unkindness. I need hardly say to you how contrary all this is both to the Bible and common sense. Our own judgment teaches us that religion is very largely composed of good behaviour, and that if this be absent, or very partial in

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the life, we have a right to suspect the religion that is professed. And the Book from which the purest religion gets its rise, and in which it finds its earliest examples, and where is enshrined the story of its founder, this book tells us differently, on many a page and in many a story. I take a verse from the old Testament to make this very clear.

After saying that it is not enough to offer sacrifices and make prayers, the speaker, Micah, asks, "What does the Lord require of thee but to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God?" I call this God's triangle.

DO RIGHT. BE KIND. BE HUMBLE.

And it seems to me that the essence and the substance of all good behaviour lies here.

One further word is necessary at this point. Never believe that the New Testament lowers the quality of the religion, or lowers the standard of morality found in the Old Testament.

The New Testament does not require less, but more, than the Old. Religion and Morality in the new Testament are so woven together that no man can put them asunder.

DO RIGHT. BE KIND. BE HUMBLE.

I. **Be fair in dealing** ; that is the business side of it. Be fair in treatment ; that is the family and brotherly side of it. God wants you to do rightly in your dealings with all. Not a thread short in the warp. Not a yard short in the piece. Not a word unfair in the talk about another. Not an act unjust to man, woman or child.

II. **Be kind—Love mercy.** When all is correct, and all right, then still *a bit more*. Do right, and more ; indeed, this is a part of the right—love mercy. And notice that this is to be your course because you love it.

You *may* do right ; you *must* do right ; you must also love to be kind.

III. **Be humble.** In the midst of all our

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relations to others we are to remember that we have a God above us, and that we are to walk lowly and humbly before Him. Right is right, but it is not all. Kindness is right, but that is not all. Both of these may be done and a very proud heart remain. Walk humbly with thy God.

THESE FORM GOD'S TRIANGLE

If you are anxious to know the spirit and birth and power of the Christian life you will surely go to the New Testament. But this will serve for your lesson in behaviour. God requires these things, and *there are no substitutes*. A man can't be dishonest, and make it up in kind generosity. A man cannot be straight and strict in business matters, and neglect kindness. A man is not permitted to assume humility in the presence of God and take it out by lording it over others.

God requires these three things in our behaviour, and it is the minimum. If you

would be a Christian, then along with your faith and hope and emotion you must have,

RIGHTNESS. KINDNESS. HUMILITY.

XI

The Rule of the Road ,

“In lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself.”—PHIL. ii. 3.

I AM calling my address to-day, “The Rule of the Road.” But I shall want to move the idea on one or two stages before I have done.

I remember reading when I was a lad a couple of verses in the corner of some newspaper which have stuck to me ever since.

The rule of the road is a paradox quite ;
In riding or driving along,
If you keep to the left you are sure to go right,
If you keep to the right you go wrong.

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In walking the street 'tis a different case ;
To the right it is right you should bear,
On the left should be left enough of clear space
For the passengers you may meet there.

That is the law of the road. And very convenient it is, when all on the pavement or street remember the rule. But we all know that if rule were all, the world would be a hard place.

We have added to the "Rule" of the road, the "courtesies" or "civilities" of the road.

You make room for women to pass on the pavement. Without thinking much about it I am sure you have extended those courtesies. Of course you sometimes have to get off to make room for others,—sweeps and millers coming from business, and some men returning from the public house.

These civilities of the footpath become almost instinctive. It is a rule of my road to *make room for people carrying burdens.*

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Not because I am afraid of having my hat knocked off by the butcher's basket or my head bruised by a step-ladder, but because I have thought about the added weight to a burden when it has to be carried on and off a kerbstone. I go a little further. Whenever I meet men *going to or returning from work* I step out of the way. One man has may be ten hours' hard work behind him, the other may have ten hours before, and I give them free road.

These may be very small matters to talk about here, but I invite you to follow the same course as far as you can.

And it is of immediate use for us to apply the idea as a test to ourselves. Have you in the past been thoughtful or kind enough to consider these people? Do you care enough about these people to make their way smooth and easy for them? But the question will arise, "Haven't I as much right on the pavement as any other man?" Every bit.

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But when you begin to talk about rights, you touch a very deep matter. And let me tell you that the *millennium* about which people talk will come on the evening of the day when people all give up striving for their own rights and commence helping other people to get theirs.

Now, what is the application of all this? Of course I have to bring in religion, you say. Men! all this is *religion* to me and if I thought you would go away to pay more heed to the little courtesies of life I should hardly go on to say more. But one more step I would carry you with me. When people are going to work, you make room. When women are going to market or church, you make way. So, also, when people are trying to get to Heaven, we ought to be careful not to stand in their way.

I know women who can never get to chapel; their husbands stand in their way—women who, when younger, used to be maidens active

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in Christian work. *Now* they never mingle with God's people ; their husbands are the hindrance. Give your wife a chance of Heaven. I hope you are travelling that way yourself ; but if not, at least do not prevent any one else.

XII

Mortgaging the Future

“Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me.”—LUKE XV. 12.

I SAW this short sentence in a shop window in Paternoster Row, London. It arrested my steps for a moment, and it has been in my memory ever since. What does it mean? What is the business arrangement called a Mortgage?

A man owns property. He needs cash, but does not wish to sell. For an immediate supply of his needs, he gives another man certain, claims on his property. This is the essence of the contract.

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As used in this topic it means that a man possesses a future, which is another way of saying he expects to keep on living so long.

In order to get certain liberties now, he gives a pledge that what duties he does not attend to now he will attend to in those coming years.

He probably never fixes the date. It is really like saying, "Let me have my way now: I will straighten matters another time. Let me take it easily to-day. I will make it up later on

Some men are idle. They like to be, they want to be. If any friend is true enough to speak about it they say, "Oh! I shall have plenty of time later on." Their life is like a train of seventy compartments. They leave all the early compartments empty and say they will crowd everything in lower down the train.

Some men love pleasure. They give

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their days to it, and nights too, very often. They have ambitions, and would be very sorry to think they would never achieve them. When a friend expostulates (and happy man is he who has so true a friend !) these men say, "Oh, I'll do some serious work later on. I'll pull up. I can soon make up for lost time." This man is promising everybody that *later on* he will toil like a slave.

Some men are wasteful of opportunities. They mean to get on in life, in business, in art. They are a bit piqued when another man steps into an open door in front of them. But they say, "There will be plenty of chances. I am only young yet. Plenty of time." They deeply pledge themselves that they will be ready for the next. Now, men, these are instances of what is going on around us. *Ought we to pledge our future* in this fashion ? Let us give clear answers.

(1) Probably two chances of the same

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kind never come to a man ; and certainly, he always gets the better start if he takes the early opportunity.

(2) You never can do so much in a crowded year as in two years over which it is wisely distributed.

(3) The fact is, you cannot make up for the lazy years of an idle youth. Time lost then is lost for ever.

Men ! the principles lying beneath these simple lessons lie beneath all our lives.

It is true about *morals* that mortgaging the future is a dangerous experiment. Wild oats do not make wheat crops, and wicked young men do not turn into wise and pure fathers. And, after all, what right have we to say, " I will be good next year, only let me do as I like this." " I will turn to God afterwards," says many a young man, full of folly. The day for the turning is now. How much better to go straight from the beginning. Then there are no losses to make good, no mortgages

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to pay off, no time to recover ; all the future will be yours and God's and no man have any claim upon you at all.

XIII

Let By-gones be By-gones

“ A repentance which bringeth no regret.”
—2 COR. vii. 10.

You know the kind of occasion that gives rise to this expression. There has been quarrel, estrangement, difference. A better moment seems to have come, and one of the parties, wishing the past all sponged out, says, “ Well, let by-gones be by-gones.” He means—Let us turn our faces from the past, forget all offences, and start afresh.

It is a very happy word to hear in a man’s mouth. Now I want to ask you to consider :
Who are the people who have the right to use this word ?

I know the folks who often do use the words. Very often indeed it is the man who created

the offence and brought about the alienation. He now has a better mood on him, at any rate for the moment, and in a gush of feeling says, "Let by-gones be by-gones."

That man has no business to use them at all. He is a husband who has been a bit of a brute—not a violent, vulgar one maybe, but still cruel. He sees his wife is breaking down. In an attack of remorse he uses these words. I mean to say he has no right to use the words at all.

Let him change his conduct. Let him deeply repent, aye, and ask forgiveness, and it is the woman who has the right to say, and soon will say, "Let by-gones be by-gones."

An employee has been lazy and dishonest. He is brought up and reproved. Is it for him to talk about letting by-gones go by? That word belongs to his master.

When a youth, a son, has pained and grieved a mother, it is too flippant a word for such a lad to take into his lips. The mother will be

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very glad to say it when the by-gones are atoned for, by fitting sorrow and fitting change. Her's is the word, and it is not for him to quote about by-gones. And when we turn to consider our relations to our Lord we find that there, too, the word is not ours to use.

What right have we to sin and sin and sin, and then say, "Let by-gones be by-gones." Only the Lord Himself can say that.

When the Lord does say it, then may you too. You need then grieve and worry no more, as though the difference still existed, and the account was still unpaid. You may start afresh with courage and cheer, for when the Lord says it, they have gone—

THE BY-GONES ARE BY-GONES

XIV

Fired

“ He went in, . . and he went out ”

2 KINGS v. 25, 27.

THIS is the story of Gehazi, and a very striking story it is. I want to make it in five lines, and we shall find this story as fresh as yesterday's shower of rain or the morning's Police Court News.

I. Here is a man who lives with a man of God. What fine chances some men have ! All of us have some good chances. Some of us seem to have all the good chances there are. Living with a good man. Father. Master, Mate. Seeing goodness every day. If we are not near the Kingdom ourselves, we know those who are, and we have seen the way in.

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II. Yet this man was not satisfied. He had bad, hankering desires. Some men never seem to be content with what can be had in a right and legitimate way.

This man is with the prophet and fares as well as the prophet. But it is not good enough for him, and he is prepared to break all the honest rules of life to get something else his heart is set on.

III. A man can generally get what he wants, and sometimes more. Gehazi succeeded beyond his dreams. Satan is ready to give any man success like this. Only bow down and worship him, and what Christ rejected you can have at the same price at which it was offered to Him. Sodom's apples are in every man's reach. Any half-holiday can take you to the devil's pasture. Success along these lines is very easy to get.

IV. The Interview. Gehazi put on a smooth face, dusted his sandals and went in quite cool, not a hair turned. "Rejoice O

young man in thy youth, and let thine heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart and in the light of thine eyes; but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee to judgment."

You may wander far to satisfy your bad ambitions after a bad success, but from all the devious wandering you will thread your way irresistibly back, and you will go in to stand before your master.

V. After the Interview. And he went out. Nobody knows whereto. "Where have you been, Gehazi?" "Nowhere particular. Did you call? I've been on the premises all the time. I did not hear you." "Did not my heart go with you?"

A bit of God goes with every man everywhere, and *He knows*. Gehazi went out silently. Not a word to say. There is nothing to say when you are found out, as you will be. Men should think of the last step before they take the first. There are two other men of whom

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it is said they "went out." Judas, the classic and proverbial traitor—he went out, out of life itself, and we only know of him, that "it had been better for that man if he had not been born." Peter, the man who suddenly fell, through self-confidence. We see him go out into the darkest night he ever saw. But he was penitent and sad. We see him come back again, restored to life, and fellowship, and service.

XV

Abraham and not Lot

GENESIS xviii. 22-30.

IN this story there are two men who become prominent. Two good men. For although Lot does not come out well if we read his whole life, we have the New Testament for it that he had a "righteous soul."

Now of these two good men, one becomes an intercessor so urgent and powerful that 3,000 years afterwards we cannot read the story of it without being thrilled.

Why does one become a mighty intercessor rather than the other? Can this secret be explained? It is to be remembered that Abraham had nothing at stake in the

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threatened destruction of Sodom. Lot had everything at stake.

Abraham could only know the condition of the city as an outsider, a countryman. Lot knew it by personal contact, a townsman. Yet it is Abraham who intercedes, and not Lot.

Why was this? We are not surprised at the facts. We should have been surprised had Lot been able to pray mightily. We know he did not go to Sodom as a missionary.

But can the thing be made plain to us? Yes, quite plain enough for us to avoid the mistake of the one, and to strive after the example of the other.

The lesson and fact is, that *praying power is not a thing which can be separated from the life we live*. This power of intercession is perhaps the supreme achievement of the soul. It is not a faculty that can be used apart from the spiritual condition of a man.

A man cannot say, "Go to, I will now pray

mightily." On entering, a man cannot say, "Now I will pray powerfully to-night." A man with a short body cannot reach a great height, nor can a little soul pray a great prayer. Abraham was a finer man, and so could pray a grander prayer.

How did Abraham become qualified? It was known as much of Abraham as of Enoch, that he walked with God. Under the still starry sky, on the broad plain and hill, Abraham cultivated his soul, while Lot, in the bustling city, cultivated his business and the friendship of wicked men.

That day of the prayer was not the first day spent in the presence of the Lord. Abraham knew God before this. You can speak boldly only to a well-known friend. You heard Lot pray, did you not? "Let me go to this little town Zoar, and don't send me to the hills." Narrow, selfish, hard-hearted—for at the very moment the clouds shot fire into the town Sodom.

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How singular that this petty little prayer should be answered, and Abraham's not. The next morning Abraham went out to the ridge of hills ; saw his own peaceful homestead in the distance behind ; and beyond the hills, the smoke of the fire ascending from the valley. Yet I would rather have prayed Abraham's prayer and failed, than Lot's and succeeded.

Can we pray ? Are we able to pray ? Can our souls rise to the holy exercise ? If not, let us start to climb the hill. The summit of mighty intercession is only reached by taking our whole selves with us. When we go to the hill of prayer, *we go as we are*, and our condition of soul decides what the prayer will be.

XVI

Is Christianity True ?

“The truth shall make you free.”—JOHN viii. 32.

“**Brothers, Christianity is true.**” I say this because I firmly believe that a good tree is requisite to produce good fruit. I am prepared to have Christianity judged by the fruit it produces.

But I want to make one preliminary remark. My faith must be judged by the fruit it really produces. If you belonged to a firm, you would not like to have its work judged by the samples from the hand of prentice, bungler, or shirker. You would say, “No, that’s not fair : take the work of the best men.”

We in the Christian Church have got apprentices who have not yet learned all the secret.

We have bunglers who make blunders and maybe will do so to the end of the chapter. I am afraid we have lots of shirkers too—the sort of men who are poor stuff everywhere. A man of this stamp is a poor teetotaller, a poor neighbour, a poor workman, a poor Christian, poor all through. He has a bad bone in him, and hasn't honestly tried to get it out—he's afraid of amputation. But don't judge Jesus Christ by him, or the Christian religion by the sample he grows.

The plain statement I have to make is this: "A false thing and a lie could not make people brave, or make people tender, or make people holy." Christianity that is personal faith in Jesus Christ makes people all three.

I. It makes people brave. Other things do, Patriotism for instance, or love of children. But they are both true, real things.

You have probably seen the picture "Diana or Christ." A fair maid is being urged by lover and father and friend to throw a pinch

of incense into the altar fire, as an offering to Diana. The picture shows her under the stress of persuasion and temptation. "To the Lions" is the alternative. History tells us that she and numbers of her sisters went to the lions, their courage not failing them.

II. **It makes people tender.** You have read, I hope, the story of *The lady of the lamp*. That sounds like the title of one of the Arabian Nights Tales. But it was lived out in the hospital tents at Scutari. Florence Nightingale, a tender refined woman, for Jesus Christ's sake spending and being spent among the wounded and dying soldiers of the Crimea.

It was not mere revulsion that had to be got over, but positive danger, when Elizabeth Fry and her companion went into Fleet Prison to take a sweet word of comfort to the lost souls there. And why did she go? Whence sprang the fountain of tenderness in her? Listen: she wrote on one occasion, "For seventeen years I have never awakened

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by day or night, in sickness or in health, without my first thought being, "How can I serve my Lord to-day?" A religion that does these things is true.

III. It makes men holy. I know a man who lived till mid-life, careless, drinking, swearing, wicked all round. One day in the open he heard some evangelist say, "No man can serve two masters." He was changed, in his thoughts, on the spot. I have known him for years now, and all the time he has been living a serene, pure, useful life. I know him to have passed through anxiety, poverty, wearying sickness, but he is the same man everywhere. Did a lie work that change?

Friends, Christianity is true.

XVII

The Drink Business a Trade,
not a "Calling"

ROMANS xii.

A MINISTER is a man called of God ; we want no man to be a minister unless thus called. But I should be sorry to believe that, of all callings, this is the only Christian one.

What is his "calling"? was a question often asked at one time. But the term "calling" is a religious one, a recognition that God calls men to their various duties. A baker or milk seller, a purveyor of food, is one who might well be called of God to his work.

So might a builder of good houses, a seller of sound clothes, a chairmaker, or a schoolmaster.

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Go through your streets and everywhere you can see the evidence of faithful and intelligent industry. Everywhere you can see that these and many other industries are truly callings of God.

But in going through a street on such an errand, you will instinctively jump over a whole trade because it does not bear any of the good marks which prove it to be a "calling." A trade, but not a "calling." If we could photograph the work of all the shops and trades about us, what would be the result?

At the door of the builders would be an album of substantial homes which had been built from that yard. At the door of the school would be photos of boys educated there who had made their way in the world.

And this trade which I have excepted would have its record too. If, on the pavement in front of the door, we could put a red cross for every young man or woman who has gone astray by the influence of that trade, the

pavement would be so full of the signs of the wreck that everybody would turn into the road on reaching the place.

The result of the drink trade proves it to be no calling of God.

Then, further ! This business injures every "calling," and thus proves it cannot be a "calling" itself. This trade makes men houseless, men coatless, men foodless, men homeless.

Further still, this trade not only injures men's callings, but the men themselves. This is what forces teachers to speak against it.

The money spent on drink in this country would not worry me so much if that was all the loss. I suppose we have been able to afford so far.

But no nation can afford to lose its men, women, and children. I take up the report of a government enquiry, and find that three out of every four in all our prisons graduated at some public house ; that one out of every

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four in the lunatic asylums started from the same dépôt. Further, that 140,000 people in the trade only live half their allotted time. Then the thought floods my mind, "How are the children affected" by all this? It is too terrible to think of.

Lastly, this trade is no "calling of God," for it is at dead strife with all the churches.

You may make furniture, and you will strengthen the comforts of home. You may build, and we will employ you to raise a House of God. You may teach, and you are our ally, clearing away ignorance and superstition.

But if you make or sell drink, what are you doing for the Church? There is a church nowhere proof against its inroad. I knew a Sunday School Superintendent who died a drunkard. His wife, once a pure Christian woman, has since danced in taprooms full of men for permission to drink out of their glasses.

A few years ago a murderer was hung at Leicester who once was a good lad in a school I knew well. It was the drink that did it. It is ascertained that at least 45,000 Sunday School children become drunkards every year.

Fellow Christian, you face a trade which is a very devil's agency for destroying men, women, and children.

What will you do? You can fight it, or neglect it, or even encourage it by an occasional sixpence.

But it is written, . . . Will not the Lord render to every man according as his work shall be !

XVIII

Christ's Second Coming

THERE is much excited teaching nowadays, very popular in some quarters, about the nearness of the return of Jesus to earth.

I want to say frankly and plainly that Jesus Christ Himself seemed to know nothing whatever of any such return. From Matthew to John there is no clear word on which such theory can be built, while there are many words which point to the fact that Jesus will not personally come again until He comes to judgment.

I bring up this matter for practical reasons. It is a mistake to absorb too much attention in a future matter which may be very far ahead, as is done by many people, who make

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this the very central theme of their thinking and teaching. Let us see what is taught.

Jesus often speaks of coming again, and a careful reading makes it plain that he uses the word in many different ways.

I. There is a coming to the hearts of Believers. John xiv. 18, says, "I come unto you." And the guarantee of this being for every believer to the end of time is in the words, "If a man love Me he will keep My words, and I will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." This was in answer to the question, "Lord how wilt Thou manifest thyself unto us and not unto the world also?" "Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away and come again unto you." "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Without what is called a "second coming" Jesus is with every faithful disciple to the very end.

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II. Then there is a historical coming. To the High Priest Jesus said, "Henceforth ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power." "From this time" Jesus meant. He began to reign at once. His Lordship commences now. The Father has given all rule and judgment unto the Son.

At one time he said, "There be some standing here who shall not taste of death till they have seen the Son of Man come." "This generation shall not pass till these things be fulfilled." This coming seems to mean the Judgment day of the Jews which fell forty years afterwards.

There is also a coming which is to be often repeated through all history. "Where the carcase is, there will the vultures be gathered together." When a nation or a family or a man becomes a rotting carcase, there and then will the Son of Man come to judgment.

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III. Then there is a final coming to wind up human history, to the judgment of the world.

There is a sense in which nations and men are judged in the course of history. This is judgment by Christ as shown under the last division. But there is a general judgment.

Sodom and Gomorrah had been judged; but Jesus says the men of those days will find it tolerable in the Day of Judgment, as compared with others, distinctly pointing to a future judgment.

Christ is near now, for He has come. Near enough to know whether Christians are about their work. Near enough to mark your dangers before you know them yourselves. Near enough to see the oppressor's hand fall on his victim, and to hear the victim's bitter cry. And one day He will not only be near, but visible ; for He will come to open judgment. But if this is all, does it not destroy the belief in a millennium? No ! But it puts us into

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the right attitude towards it. Our chief business is to concentrate our attention to living the good life now, and committing ourselves with patience and faith to Him Who loved us and gave Himself for us.

XIX

Before the Judge

“ We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.”—2 COR. V. 10.

I. The fact. We must all appear, etc. Be manifested, be shown up, put in an appearance personally. Not for enquiry, notice, or for search or examination. For Judgment, that is for delivery of Judgment, or for sentence. This sentence being the public declaration of what the judge thinks about us, and the consequent destiny to which we shall be consigned.

Remember that Judgment is not necessarily anger. No judge is an enemy to an innocent man. He is his best friend. He can set the innocent at liberty. “ There is there-

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ore no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

II. **Whose judgment seat?** Christ's. Then the Judgment will be *fair* but unwavering. It will also be *complete*—covering all the life. *Final*, also, for there is no appeal beyond.

The person of the judge decides the form and kind of judgment. Christ's Judgment seat. The sentence to be what He thinks of us. Try to imagine a selfish man appearing before Him Who though rich became poor! A proud man standing before the Lord who humbled Himself and made Himself of no reputation!

The impure man, Oh! the shame that will burn him up! the impure man in the presence of Jesus. And what can the lazy and heartless man say when made to stand before the eyes that melted with compassion when the shepherdless poor were seen.

This is the test to which we are to be put :

How shall we look in the presence of Jesus Christ ?

III. The important hour. Which is it ? We fix our thoughts often on the wrong day.

That Judgment is not the most important of all. This very day, and this hour, is of the greatest importance.

When the criminal, say a murderer, stands for judgment in a court of law, the most serious day to him is that day when in a passion he struck the blow that made him a murderer. If he could only undo that day's work, this judge would be no fear to him.

Your great day is *this* day. What will you do with this offer of mercy now made ? Accept it, and you will not fear the Judgment. Reject it, and you will live to look back on your act with horror and shame.

IV. Your Plea. There are three possible pleas.

(1) **Not Guilty.** This you may not be prepared to offer.

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(2) **Extenuating circumstances.** You had not a fair chance. You try to blame your mother. Though most likely you gave her more trouble than ever she gave you. Your difficulties were so great. No judge was ever more prepared to give the accused the benefit of the doubt. But He Himself has said beforehand, "Since I have spoken unto them they have no excuse for their sin."

(3) **Guilty.** "But thou art my Saviour. I gave my trust to Thee long ago. See, here is the sprinkled blood, and the mark of Thy cross."

'Tis just the sentence should take place ;

'Tis just ! but oh ! Thy Son hath died.

XX

That Anchor Holds

“ Rest in the Lord, wait patiently for Him.”
—PSALM xxxvii. 7.

I. This is fulfilled by the Believer in the midst of life's changes and trials.

It is the rest of reliance ; then of hope. Depending without impatience on His power and love. Waiting for His own good time.

Some of our trials come with sudden and unexpected smart, and like Job's all our treasures are buried in one grave. Some grow on us and are all the more fearful because we see them creep stealthily nearer. We stand helpless like the girl martyr in the Coliseum, watching the tiger creep towards his prey.

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But we retire on God. We draw back into Him. We say, "Even so, Father," and we rest and wait.

II. It is also fulfilled by the dead in Christ. We know very little of the life immediately beyond our sight. But the last moments of the Christian's earthly life are moments of repose and trust.

In a sick house a friend of mine sat nursing his youngest child. Later on in the night it stirred on his knee, then looked around. Everything appeared strange, and its little chin began to quiver, and its lips to pucker for a cry. Then looking upward it saw its father's face looking down upon it. At once the tear gave way to the smile and it quietly went to sleep again. A stranger's face would have brought the cry of fear.

So does the Christian go to sleep in peace because he recognizes the face of His Keeper Who neither slumbers nor sleeps. The whole life is a life of trust ; but never is trust more

complete than when he dare go to sleep at last in His arms.

III. Also fulfilled by the Believer left behind. We wait for the coming of Christ, and them also whom He will bring with him—our once lost friends.

Let us remember that this faith means dependence on Christ's resurrection power.

Resurrection is not a natural process that will occur of itself. The resurrection power is the personal power of our Lord. "I am the resurrection and the life," He said, in Whom we trust both for ourselves and our loved ones, who sleep in Him.

XXI

Inside or Out

MATTHEW XXV.

THIS is the story of ten girls invited to be bridesmaids at a wedding. At a certain hour all are to meet the wedding to go together to the wedding feast.

Some delay occurs, and the party of ten have to wait a long time. Their torches are scarcely likely to last out the time. It is very inconvenient. But it turns out that five of the ten were steady-going, thoughtful girls who provided against such mishap. The other five wished to borrow part of their oil. But who knows how long the Bridegroom will be? No! No! you go and buy some. And they go.

But while they are gone the party arrives.

With the five ready virgins they enter to the feast, and once for all the door is shut and fastened.

Then back come those other maidens.

They are refused admittance owing to the door having been shut. They were invited, remember, but all through bad preparation and unreadiness they did not get in.

They were angry with themselves and turned away much disappointed ; but I think they made up their minds never to be late again.

But why do we grow solemn as we get to the end of the story ; Why does our voice become sad :—only a few girls disappointed of a wedding feast ; and they will take better care next time.

Why ? Because we know the wedding is not a wedding. The feast is not a feast, over in a few hours. The virgins are you and me. The bridegroom is Christ. The feast is heaven and salvation.

94 BRIGHT AND BRIEF TALKS

The invitation is, "Come to the marriage supper of the Lamb," and it ends with hearing their footsteps, that might have danced it merrily in joyous company within, going away and still away into the blackness of the night.

I. Observe—

These were all invited to come. Who is not? "Whosoever will may come." The King's servants are out in highway and byway with the invitation.

II. None of these were altogether indifferent. All went to some little trouble and expense. How many of our hearers are there who do not mean to be in at last. Perhaps none!

III. Was the blame really theirs—these late ones? Yes! For they knew where the oil was to be had.

IV. The Result. No time to fetch. Too late to get in.

The last we hear of them is their going away

into the dark. There was one party to start with. Now there are two—

IN and OUT.

Among which will you be ?

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